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A

# SERMON

ON

THE PARABLE

OF

**THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS.**

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## A SERMON.



LUKE, XVI. 19--31.

*“ There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried, and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they who would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, Father, that thou wouldst send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren: that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, they have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham; but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”*

It is a command of our Lord and Saviour that we “*search the Scriptures,*” and of the Apostle Paul, that we “*prove all things; hold fast that which is good.*” Therefore, notwithstanding many learned and good men have advocated the doctrine of endless misery, and adduced the text as proof of it, we cannot receive it because they have believed it, nor our text as proof of it, because it has been used as such. We receive no doctrine until we are convinced of its truth by evidence. Whenever our views of Christianity agree with those of our brethren of other denominations, we feel no small degree of pleasure in making it known; but we feel it our imperious duty openly to avow our difference from them, when their views seem to us to disagree with the plainest passages of scripture, and the simplest dictates of reason.

That part of the scriptures which we have selected as our text, is said by many to be, not a parable, but a literal relation of facts. It is easy to see why they contend that this is not a parable. If it is a parable, the proof it is supposed to contain of the doctrine of misery in a future state, is greatly impaired. Those things which Jesus used *as figures* of the reality, have been taken for the reality itself. A parable is not unlike a similitude; it is "a relation under which something else is figured." Our Saviour often spake in parables. "He spake many things unto them in parables." Matt. xiii. 3. So common a thing was it for him to speak in this way, that Matthew has said, "without a parable spake he not unto them," xiii 34. The most of you will recollect the beautiful and instructive parable of the sower, which our Saviour himself explained. The sower went forth to sow. "Some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up. Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth; and forthwith they sprung up because they had no deepness of earth; and when the sun was up they were scorched; and because they had no root they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up and choaked them. But others fell into good ground," &c. Now we do not think that a man actually went and sowed seed in this way. Such an interpretation would destroy the idea of a *parable*. The doctrine which he meant to teach was, that the truth would be received in different ways by different people, and that it would produce different effects. See his explanation of this parable, Matt. xiii. 18—23. We think that the text is a parable. The evidence of this, which we shall lay before you, is to us irresistible. But before we introduce this part of our subject, we will, for a moment, allow the text to be a literal relation of facts; and we will inquire whether, allowing this, it will prove either of the two great doctrines advocated by christians in gen-

eral. One of these doctrines is believed by Calvinists, viz. that God elected to his favor before the world was created, those who will finally be saved; and that he reprobated to his eternal ire all the rest of mankind. What does the text contain in favor of this doctrine? What do we find in it about election and reprobation? Are we informed that the rich man was reprobated to God's eternal wrath? Or that God hated him? Or that he loved Abraham, or Lazarus more than him? Are we informed that Lazarus was elected to God's peculiar favor? I cannot see one word in the text in favor of the notion, either of election or reprobation. How then does it afford this doctrine any proof? How can it prove that concerning which it does not contain even a reference?

The other doctrine to which I alluded, is, that mankind will be punished and rewarded in the future state for the vices and virtues of this world. What does the text, understanding it literally, contain in favor of this doctrine? We read that the rich man was in torments in *hades*; but not because he had been wicked: and we read that the beggar was happy; but not because he had been good. I see no evidence, in the text, that the rich man was a very bad man, or that the beggar was better than he. We are not informed that the former obtained his riches improperly, or that the beggar did not become poor by his own negligence or imprudence. Is it a sin to be rich? Is it a virtue to be poor? It has been alleged against the rich man, that he refused Lazarus the crumbs which fell from his table. If this be a fact, why did Lazarus lay at his gate? We should judge by the account, that some persons, through compassion, perhaps the friends of the beggar, carried him to the rich man's gate, and laid him there. Would they have done this, had they known him to be covetous? Of all places the rich man's gate was selected as the most proper for the poor man to lay at. Besides, the word translated *desiring* in the

account, is sometimes rendered *delighting*.<sup>\*</sup> And if we read that the beggar *delighted* to be fed with the crumbs, is not this a proof that he was not denied them? How then will the text prove that men will be punished in the future state because they are sinful in this world? I repeat, I see no evidence that the rich man was a bad man. The prayer which he offered to Abraham is a manifestation of a good spirit. How much better could Lazarus or Abraham have prayed, had either been in the rich man's situation? The rich man prayed that his five brethren might be warned, and prevented from coming to that place of torment. Abraham seems at one time to be accounting for the rich man's torment: but he says nothing about any previous wickedness in him. "Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted and thou art tormented." He did not say, remember thou in thy life time wast wicked, but Lazarus good.

Another inquiry properly coming before us is, does not the literal sense of the text pointedly disagree with the notions of those who contend that it is not a *parable*? We often hear that those who go to hell never have one holy feeling; no desire for the company of the blessed; that they spend their time in blaspheming God. Was it so with

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<sup>\*</sup>The word here rendered *desiring* is *epithumon*. Of this word Parkhurst says, that, written with an infinitive following, it signifies "to be content, or glad, to esteem it a great matter;" and he adduces the instance in the parable before us, of its occurring in this sense. To which he adds, "thus Elsner on Luke xvi. 21, explains it, and observes not only that the LXX. have so applied it, Isa. lviii. 2, but that Lysias has used it in a like sense, Orat. 24. Dr. Campbell says, "I agree with those who do not think there is any foundation, in this expression, for saying that he was refused the crumbs. When the historian says, that he was laid at the rich man's gate, he means not, surely, that he was once there, but that he was usually so placed, which would not probably have happened, if he had got nothing at all. The other circumstances concur in heightening the probability. Such are, the rich man's immediately knowing him, his asking that he might be made the instrument of the relief wanted; and, let me add this, that though the Patriarch upbraids the rich man with the carelessness and luxury in which he had lived, he says not a word of inhumanity; yet, if we consider Lazarus as having experienced it so recently, it could hardly, on this occasion, have failed to be taken notice of. Can we suppose that Abraham, in the charge he brought against him, would have mentioned only the things of least moment, and omitted those of the greatest?" Note on Luke xvi. 21.

the rich man? Do we read of his blaspheming God? No; but we read of his offering up a prayer, and a very good one too. "I *pray* thee therefore, father," said he, "that thou wouldst send him (Lazarus) to my father's house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment." Did he not in this language breathe forth a good desire? Did he not have a holy feeling? Abraham, when speaking of the great gulf, said it was fixed "so that they who would pass from hence to you cannot: neither can they pass to us that would come from thence." Here two things should be noticed. 1. There were some with Abraham that would go to the rich man; but could not. And, 2. There were some with the rich man who would go to Abraham; but could not. It appears from this, that there were some in hell who had a desire for the company of the blessed, and would have gone to them, had it been in their power. And we learn, furthermore, that hell cannot be so dreadfully hot a place as it has been represented to be. For if this were so, the rich man we should think would have called for more water than Lazarus could have carried on the tip of his finger. And suppose the common idea of a devil be correct, how would he be pleased to have so benevolent a prayer as that of the rich man, offered up in his dark dominions? The *literal* sense of the text disagrees very much with many people's notions of a future world.

Now let us turn to Abraham and those with him. It is commonly supposed that those who are in heaven are serenely happy, and perfectly reconciled to the will of God. We have already shown that there were some in the place of happiness who would go to the rich man; but could not. They were not, therefore, perfectly happy, inasmuch as they were desirous of doing that which they were not permitted to do. Neither were they reconciled to the will of God; for it was the

will of God that they should not go, and he had made the great gulf to prevent them. Wishing to do what was not permitted to be done, they were unhappy, and being unreconciled to God, they were wicked. If wicked, they must have been miserable. So we have one argument to prove that those who were with Abraham were wicked, and two that they were miserable. How will these things agree with the opinions of those who contend that the text is a literal relation of facts? Those who were in heaven were unreconciled to God, and those who were in hell were unreconciled to the devil. How can the text be explained *literally* by our opposers, and they maintain also their present notions?

But it may be said, those in heaven were benevolent, sympathetic, and were urged by good motives to endeavor to relieve the distressed. But I ask, how could they be ignorant of God's determination to punish the wicked eternally? And will it be said, they were better than God? Was not he as good, sympathetic and benevolent as they? Let those who interpret the text literally consider these things. Let them tell us why those in heaven wished to go down to hell. Was it to abide there? Was it to relieve some friend, some relation? Would some parent comfort his child? Some child, its parent? Some brother, a sister? Some husband, a wife? No, answer the orthodox, the saints say Amen, alleluia, when they see the smoke of the wicked's torment ascend. How will those who do not allow that the text is a parable, surmount these difficulties?

Now allowing the text to be a literal relation, what will it prove? It will *not prove the doctrine of election and reprobation; it will not prove that men are to be punished or rewarded in the next life for their conduct in this*; but it will prove that there was a man tormented in *hades*, who was a good man in some respects, and for aught we know, as good as any body else; it will prove that those who are



in heaven are both wicked and miserable, that they wish to leave the place and go to hell; and it will prove that some notions which orthodox people have entertained for years, are totally erroneous. Those who contend that it is not a parable, for any thing I see, must allow all these things.

But the hearer will say, that the text, understood literally, proves that men will be punished after death. I answer, if we interpret it literally, and suppose the death of the rich man to mean the departure of life from his animal frame, then it will teach that one man was tormented in another state of being; but whether it should be for one year, one day or hour, we could not tell. One thing is certain, it would not then prove the doctrine of *endless torment*, because the place, *the hell* in which the rich man was tormented *is to be destroyed*, according to the testimony of Hosea, "*O hades, I will be thy destruction,*" (Hos. xiii. 14.) and of John, "*And death and hades were cast into the lake of fire,*" (Rev. xx. 14,) and of Paul, "*O hades where is thy victory,*" (1 Cor. xv. 55.) But if I may have the liberty of interpreting parables literally, I will engage to prove you almost any thing. There is no intelligent christian who does not know that those things which Jesus used as figures of the reality, should not be considered the reality itself.

There is sufficient evidence, both internal and external, to prove that the text is a parable. We will briefly examine the internal first. It is stated in the text that the beggar was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. Now I ask, can any one suppose that celestial beings actually, really carried a poor beggar and put him into the bosom of the patriarch Abraham? No; you say, this is a representation of heaven. Now you have interpreted the text as a parable yourselves. And permit me to remark, that I have all the right to interpret the whole text parabolically that you have to interpret any part of it so. You will see that

these people are represented as having bodily organs and powers with them. The rich man had eyes and a tongue, and Lazarus fingers. Can this be interpreted literally? Do disembodied spirits in the world to come have eyes, and tongues, and fingers, and the powers of speech, of hearing and of seeing? We do not profess to know much about spirits in another world, but we believe this is not the common opinion upon the subject. However, it belongs to those who say the text is not a parable, to show how this can be, to give some proof upon the subject; and to shew us how people in heaven and hell can converse with apparent ease from one place to the other.

The external evidence that the text is a parable is the connexion in which it is found. We should maintain a proper connexion throughout our Lord's discourse. I see no way to do this, if we do not consider the text to be a parable. It is found connected with a number of parables, in Luke xv. and xvi.

In the beginning of the 15th chapter, we find a murmur which the scribes and Pharisees expressed, because Jesus received sinners and ate with them. In the three parables which fill up the remainder of this chapter, viz. that of the lost sheep, lost pieces of silver, and prodigal son, Jesus vindicated that part of his conduct of which they had complained. But in the last of these three parables, a character was presented which had not appeared in either of the others. This was the elder brother of the prodigal, who was angry because the prodigal was received into favor, and who very justly represented the scribes and Pharisees; for they murmured because Jesus Christ received sinners and ate with them. These Pharisees rejected the gospel; and this is represented by the elder brother's refusing to go into his father's house. In the parable of the unjust steward with which the 16th chapter is commenced, the same people are admonished for not making such improvement of

the law, as would introduce them into the christian faith and church. The Pharisees being provoked at this, derided Jesus. After briefly describing to them their conduct, he says, "the law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." Jesus then spake another parable, in which the folly of the Jews, in rejecting the gospel and adhering to the law, is represented by the sin of adultery. Then come the words of the text; "There was a certain rich man," &c. What is there in all this connexion which would have the least tendency to lead the mind to such doctrine as that which the text is used to support?—It has been justly said, "To suppose that he who spake as never man spake, abruptly dropped the subject of the end of the law dispensation, and the introduction of the gospel, or kingdom of heaven, and having no further allusion to this subject, proceeded to give an account of the sin of adultery, which account occupies but one verse, and then again flies directly from this subject, to give a literal account about a rich man and a beggar, in this world and in an eternal state, is so unwarrantable, and so derogatory to the character of the divine orator, that it is a matter of wonder that such an opinion should ever have been honored with the consent of learned commentators." Ballou.

Having shown, as I think, that the text is a parable, I shall now proceed to show you the true meaning of the word *hades*; why our Lord spake of it as a place of torment; and why he used it figuratively, as he undoubtedly did in the text. *Hades* is the word rendered hell.\* Its literal meaning is not a place of torment in another world: but the state of the dead in general, without regard to the

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\*There are four words rendered hell in the scriptures, viz. *Sheol*, *Hades*, *Tartarus*, and *Gehenna*. *Sheol*, being Hebrew, occurs only in the Old Testament. Of the 64 instances in which it is found, in 32 it is rendered hell, and in the remaining 32 pit and grave. *Hades* occurs 11 times, in 10 of which it is rendered hell, and once (1 Cor. xv. 55) grave. *Tartarus* occurs but once (2 Peter ii. 4.) *Gehenna* is found 12 times, and is uniformly rendered hell.

goodness or badness of persons, their happiness or misery. This was the meaning of the Hebrew word *Sheol*, which the LXX have almost invariably rendered *hades*. *All men go down to hades* at death, where they remain till the resurrection. It is said in the scripture that our Saviour's soul was in hell, *hades*. Not in a place of torment; but in the state of the dead, the grave. But it did not remain, for he rose from the dead. See Acts ii. 27. In the Improved Version, the place where the rich man was, is called "the unseen state," and in Wakefield's translation, "the grave." These are their definitions of *hades*. Wakefield says, in his note on this place, "It must be remembered that *hades* no where means hell, *gehenna*, in any author whatsoever, *sacred* or *profane*; and also that our Lord is giving his hearers *a parable*, (Matt. xiii. 34,) and not a piece of *real history*. To them who regard the narration as exhibiting *a reality*, it must stand as an unanswerable argument for the *purgatory* of the *Papists*. The universal meaning of *hades* is *the state of death*." Whitby, who was farther from being a Universalist than Wakefield, says, *Sheol* throughout the Old Testament, and *Hades* in the Septuagint, answering to it, signify *not the place of punishment*, or of the souls of *bad men only*, but the *grave only*, or the place of death." He says, *Hades* is the place—"Whither *we are all going*." Old Jacob went there; Job *desired*, yea prayed to go there; Hezekiah expected to be there, for he said "I shall go to the gates of *Hades*." Whitby further says, "The ancient Greeks assigned one *Hades* to all that died, and therefore say, *Hades receives all mortal men together, all men shall go to hades*." Dr. Campbell, a believer of the doctrine of endless misery, gives us the same account of *hades*. This then is what we must understand the word hell to mean, when it stands for *hades*, a place to which all men go, good and bad. We must not, when we contemplate it, look forward beyond the resurrection. All men will be

raised from *hades* to incorruption and immortality. *Then hades* will be destroyed. Our word hell, in its original signification, perfectly corresponded to the definition we have given of *Hades*. Now it does not; with christians generally here, its meaning somehow has been changed: but we are informed, I believe by Dr. Doddridge, that the original sense of the word hell is now retained in the eastern, and especially in the western counties of England; where to *hete* over a thing is to cover it. Hence says Dr. Campbell, "it (*hades*) ought never in the scripture to be rendered hell, at least in the sense wherein that word is now universally understood by christians." He says that with the meaning of *hades*, "the word hell, in its primitive signification, perfectly corresponded. For, at first, it denoted only what was secret or concealed." The rich man, and the beggar, and Abraham, were all represented as being in *hades* together. We do not read in the text that one was in hell, but the other two in heaven. This differs materially, I know, from the common opinion on this subject; but I see no way to avoid it. The text says not one word to the contrary. Nay, it rather favours the idea. For otherwise, how could the rich man see Abraham and Lazarus? How could he converse with Abraham, and how could Abraham hear him?

As we have proved by the most respectable, orthodox authority, that the literal and original meaning of *hades* is the same as the Hebrew *sheol*, signifying the state of the dead in general, the place whither we all go, whether good or bad, it remains for me to shew why our Lord spake of it as a place of torment. Let it be then remembered, that when our Lord was upon the earth, the minds of the Jews had changed with regard to *hades*; they entertained different views of it from those they imbibed by reading the Old Testament. They had deviated from that sense in which the sacred writers had used it; and thought that ghosts of departed men would be punished there. They did not

think that all who went there would be unhappy ; for they supposed it was divided into different parts, for ghosts of different characters. That they did not learn this idea from the Old Testament, is sufficiently obvious ; for no such idea is there. Dr. Campbell says, “It is plain, that in the Old Testament, the most profound silence is observed in regard to the state of the deceased, their joys, or sorrows, happiness or misery.” They could not have learned it from the New Testament ; for this was not then written. Where then did they learn it ? Answer, From the idolatrous, heathen nations around them. In support of this I shall read you a quotation from the learned author just named. He thus writes, Dis. vi. Part 2, Sect. 19. “But the opinions neither of Hebrews nor of heathen, remained invariably the same. And from the time of the captivity, more especially from the time of the subjection of the Jews, first to the Macedonian empire, and afterwards to the Roman ; as they had a closer intercourse with pagans, they insensibly imbibed many of their sentiments, particularly on those subjects, whereon their law was silent, and wherein by consequence, they considered themselves as at greater freedom. On this subject of a future state, we find a considerable difference in the popular opinions of the Jews in our Saviour’s time, from those which prevailed in the days of the ancient prophets. As both Greeks and Romans had adopted the notion, that the ghosts of the departed were susceptible both of enjoyment and of suffering, they were led to suppose a sort of retribution in that state, for their merit or demerit in the present. The Jews did not indeed adopt the pagan fables on this subject, nor did they express themselves entirely in the same manner ; but the general train of thinking in both came pretty much to coincide. The Greek *Hades* they found well adapted to express the Hebrew *Sheol*. This they came to conceive as including different sorts of habitations for ghosts of different characters.” Here

we have our question answered. On whose authority did the Jews believe that *Hades* was a place of punishment? Ans. On the authority of the heathen. Dr. Campbell says, "they insensibly imbibed many of their sentiments, particularly on those subjects whereon their law was silent, and wherein, by consequence, they thought themselves as at greater freedom. *On this subject of a future state, we find a considerable difference in the popular opinions of the Jews in our Saviour's time, from those which prevailed in the days of the ancient prophets.*" "The general train of thinking," says he, "in both (i. e. Jews and heathen) came pretty much to coincide." Now I seriously believe that it was to this opinion, that *hades* was divided into different habitations, peopled by good and bad spirits, that our Lord alluded in the text. Hence, both Abraham and the rich man are represented as being in one place, divided into different apartments by the great gulph. The Jews were tenacious of these ideas; and our Lord used them as figures of an important truth. And the reason why he spake in parables generally, may be rendered why he spake parabolically in the text. He did not allude to their doctrine to recognize it as truth; no, and all the evidence we find in the text of the truth of heathen notions concerning *hades* is, that he used them as a similitude. In the parable of the sower, to which we have before alluded, Jesus used natural things as similitudes of spiritual. We do not understand the figures as realities here, and we should not in the text.\* What intelligent person would infer from reading this parable, that a man actually went and sowed seed, some by the way side, some upon stony places, and some among thorns? Have we not proved that the text is a parable? Have we not shown that literally it proves

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\*If there are any who think that no parable, in its literal sense, is impossible, and that Jesus would not have used, even in figure, what is untrue in itself, let them consult Judges ix. 8—15.

a doctrine which nobody believes? I ask then, by what just rule of interpretation this can be said to prove the doctrine of a future state of punishment? We have the opinion of the learned that this is a parable; we see nothing to prove it is not; and we then demand, why we should not adopt the same rules in explaining it that we do in explaining other parables? Parables, we all know, are figurative language. The truth taught is to be sought under the figure.

If the text be not a parable, it should be interpreted literally throughout. But this cannot be done, as we think we have shown. We, in this way, must receive the heathen's notions of *hades*; we must consider Abraham and Lazarus in hell, as well as the rich man, and this too with their bodies, with the senses of seeing, hearing, &c. &c. Who is prepared to admit this? Let it be then distinctly understood, that it is our opinion, Jesus used those views of *hades* parabolically, which the Jews had received of the heathen. He did not use them to recognise them as realities, any more than he did the figures and imagery of his other parables.

It has been justly remarked, that if Jesus had meant to teach that *hades* was a place of punishment, he would have stated it plainly once at least. This he did not do. He hints it only, and then in a parable. And we should think if the Apostles had understood him as teaching that *hades* was a place of punishment, they would have preached it as such. This they never did. They spake of *hades*, but not as a place of punishment, or torment. Peter said, that Christ's soul was there; not in a place of torment, but in the state of the dead.—These facts weigh so heavily on our minds that we esteem it unnecessary to say more, until some one shall attempt to shew that the text is not a parable; and to invalidate the evidence we have given that it is. When any man feels disposed to contend for *heathen* notions of *hades*, as a doctrine of christi-



ianity, we will then meet him in a proper way, and discuss the question concerning the higher origin of Christianity.

We will now endeavor to show what our Saviour meant by the parable. But here we should again consult the connexion. Just before he spake the parable, he said, "the law and the prophets *were until John*: since *that time* the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." Here notice, that when Jesus spake these words, the law dispensation was ended; for that was "*until John*" only: "*since that time*," says Christ, "the kingdom of God (the gospel dispensation) is preached." "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail." By this we learn that the law could not pass away, without being fulfilled. We now come to the parable concerning adultery, which reads as follows: "Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband, committeth adultery." If the Jews had put away the law, and married another covenant *before John came*, they, in a parabolic sense, would have committed adultery. For infinite wisdom ordained that the law should remain "*until John*." And it ordained that it should remain no longer. For "*since that time* the kingdom of God is preached." The law was put away; it was fulfilled; "Christ is the end of the law"; he came to close the first dispensation, and introduce the gospel. The Jews, by rejecting the gospel, and adhering to the law, committed adultery, as would a man who should marry a woman that had been put away by her husband. The parable upon which we are now discoursing immediately follows. "There was a certain rich man," &c. The same subject is continued through the chapter. In the text, the state of the Jews, after the kingdom of God had been taken from them and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof, is beautifully figured in the description of the rich man's circum-

stances. I feel sensible that in the explanation of parables, too many have indulged themselves in the exercise of a flying fancy. We should interpret scripture by the help of scripture. I trust that without indulging in fancy, we can obtain the meaning of our Saviour in the text.

By the rich man the house of Israel is represented. They are frequently spoken of under the figure of an individual in the scriptures. God said by Hosea, "When Israel *was a child*, then I loved him, and called *my son* out of Egypt." Hosea xi. 1. "So the Lord alone did lead him, (the house of Israel) and there was no strange god with him. He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; and he made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock." Deut. xxxii. 12, 13. These are sufficient to shew that the posterity of Abraham are spoken of in the scriptures in the character of an individual.

This man was rich. "There was a certain *rich man*." He was blessed with a land flowing with milk and honey. He had advantage every way, chiefly because unto him was committed the oracles of God. In Rom. ix. 4, 5, we have in detail an account of this man's riches. "Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever, Amen."

This man was clothed in "*purple and fine linen*." So Israel is represented in the scriptures as being clad. "I clothed thee also with brodered work, and shod thee with badger's skin, and I girded thee about with *fine linen*, and I covered thee with silk. Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver, and thy raiment wast of *fine linen*, and silk, and brodered work," Ezek. xvi. 10—13. "And of the blue, and *purple*, and scarlet, they made clothes of service, to do service in the holy place, and made

the holy garments for Aaron; as the Lord commanded Moses. And he made the ephod of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen." Exo. xxxix. 1, 2.

He fared sumptuously every day. This was eminently true of Israel. God says, "thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil; and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom." The rich man's land flowed with milk and honey. He fed spiritually upon the knowledge of God, and upon the promises.

By Lazarus the beggar, the poor Gentiles, excluded from the advantages which God's covenant people enjoyed, are represented. Paul details the poverty of the Gentiles. "*At that time,*" says he, "*ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.*" They were poor indeed. His being "full of sores," represented the moral condition of the Gentiles. By the death of the beggar is represented the Gentiles' release from their idolatrous worship; and his being carried by angels into Abraham's bosom, represent the conversion of the Gentiles to the faith of Abraham, by the messengers of God. The rich man died politically. He lost his riches, his purple and fine linen, his government, his city, and his existence as a body politic. He was buried. His going into outer darkness is justly represented by being buried. He died to light, and went into darkness. The poor man died to darkness and came forth to light.—Hence he is not said to be buried. The rich man sees Lazarus in Abraham's bosom; he sees fulfilled the words of Christ, "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God."

The rich man calls upon Abraham, whom he addresses by the title of Father. This is characteristic of the Jews. Abraham was their father; and they seemed proud of their progenitor. Speaking to our Saviour, they said, "art thou greater than our father Abraham?" John told them, "think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our Father." Yes, they would be in favor with Abraham. They have disbelieved Jesus; they have abused their privileges; they have relied upon their national greatness, and the glory of their ancestors. When in distress they turned to Abraham for mercy. But their national greatness is gone, and the glory of their ancestors can afford them no relief. Abraham is represented as recognizing the relationship. He refers the rich man to his former condition, as well as to that of the beggar, and seems to give this as a reason why the former was tormented and the latter blessed. This is according to the equality of God's ways. The Jews had possessed a knowledge of God, and been blessed for a long time, while the Gentiles had been without hope, and without God in the world. Now the scene is reversed according to the appointment of God. "It was necessary," said the apostles to them, "that the word of god should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth."

The gulf which separated the rich man from Lazarus, very well represents any circumstance by which the Jews are separated from the Gentile nations. That such a separation has long existed, admits not of a doubt; and when we reflect that, although many centuries have passed away since the Jews forfeited their national character, they have never become mixed and lost among other nations,

we can but recognize some manifest design of providence in the event. By this gulf we may also understand that purpose of God, in which it is determined by infinite wisdom, that the Jews shall not believe the Gospel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. This was the subject of prophecy. Isaiah says, "who hath believed our report?" And John applies this to the unbelief of the Jews in the Messiahship of Jesus. John says, "therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart, that they should not see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them." John xii. 38—40. Matt. xiii. 14, 15. Mark iv. 11, 12. Luke viii. 10. Acts xxviii. 26—28. Rom. xi. 8. The divine purpose in this, is consistent with God's impartial character. This blindness of the Jews is to bring about the conversion of the Gentiles, through whose mercy the Jews will at last obtain mercy, Paul, addressing one of the Gentile churches, says, "For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy." Rom. xi. 30, 31. Of the unbelief of the Jews, the prophets had prophesied. When the Gentiles saw the prophecies fulfilled in the obstinacy of the Jews, they were convinced of the divine origin of christianity; they pressed into the kingdom of God. By the mercy of the Gentiles the Jews are at last to obtain mercy. Paul says, "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, (lest ye should be wise in your own conceits) that blindness in part is happened to Israel, *until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.* And so ALL ISRAEL SHALL BE SAVED; as it is written, there shall come out of Zion the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." Rom. xi. 25, 26. Although the Jews are now shut out of the kingdom, we can easily per-

ceive they are finally to be brought in. Jesus said unto them, "ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." When they will say this, we are not yet permitted to know; but no one who believes the divine testimony can doubt that they will at a proper time. The benefit derived from the gulf, will then be obtained, and Jews and Gentiles will rejoice together in the fruition of eternal life.

I have now given you my views of the text, with the evidence which induced me to adopt them. Judge for yourselves, my hearers. Let not popularity nor proscription influence you. Be not terrified by the threatening of endless woe. You can form the best judgment while you are dispassionate and calm. Treat your religious opposers with tenderness and love, yet maintain the independence and faithfulness of Christians.

The way in which we have explained the text, appears consistent with the character of God as the Father and friend of mankind; and it leads us clear of those difficulties with which those meet, who use the text to prove the unmerciful doctrine of eternal and infinite misery. But notwithstanding the explanation I have given accords with the very best feelings of your hearts, I would caution you not to receive it, if you are not convinced of its truth by the force of evidence. Rest your faith on the Bible only. Examine this with freedom and care; and God will bless your exertions to the promotion of your spiritual welfare.

#### NOTE A.

Theophylact, from whose Commentary on the Four Gospels the following extract was made, lived in the eleventh century, and was Metropolitan of Bulgaria. He certainly was not an Universalist; yet he considered it by no means as doing injustice to the parable, to explain it as we have done. Here follows the extract :

“ In the preceding verses, our Lord had taught us to conduct ourselves properly with regard to our riches ; and to the same purpose, he adds, by way of example, this Parable. For this is a Parable, and not, as some have thought, a history; because that the blessings of eternity were not yet adjudged to the righteous, nor the judgments to the wicked. But our Lord spake figuratively, designing to teach the unmerciful what was at length to come upon them, and on the other hand, to assure the afflicted how happy they are to become, for the evils they here sustain.” Accordingly, Theophylact proceeds to apply this Parable, as a representation of the different conditions of the proud sinner and of the humble saint, after the general Judgment ; and he incidentally reasons from the Parable, against Origen’s doctrine of the restoration, because Abraham says, “ that they which would pass from hence to you, cannot, neither can they pass to us that would come from thence.”

At last, however, Theophylact says, “ But this Parable can also be explained in the way of Allegory ; so that we may say that by the Rich man is signified the Jewish people. For they were formerly rich, abounding in all divine knowledge, wisdom and instruction, which are more excellent than gold and precious stones. And they were arrayed in purple and fine linen, as they possessed a kingdom, and a priesthood, and were themselves a royal priesthood to God. The purple denoted their kingdom ; and the fine linen, their priesthood. For the Levites were clothed in sacerdotal vestments of fine linen ; and they fed sumptuously and lived splendidly, every day. Daily did they offer the morning and the evening sacrifice ; which they also called the continual sacrifice. But Lazarus was the Gentile people : poor in divine grace and wisdom, and lying before the gates ; for it was not permitted to the Gentiles to enter the house itself, because they were considered a pollution. Thus, in the Acts of the Apostles we read that it was alleged against Paul that he had introduced Gentiles into the temple, and made that holy place common or unclean. Moreover, those people were full of fetid sores of sin, on which the impudent dogs, or devils, fed, who delight themselves in our sores. The Gentiles likewise desired even the crumbs which fell from the table of the Rich ; for they were wholly destitute of that bread which strengthens the heart of man, and wanted even the smallest morsel of food ; so that the Canaanite woman (Matt. xv. 27,) when she was a heathen, desired to be fed with the crumbs. In short : the Hebrew people were dead unto God, and their bones, which could not be moved to do good, were perished. Lazarus also, I mean the Gentile people, was dead in sin. And the envious Jews, who were dead in sins, did actually burn in a flame of jealousy, as saith the Apostle, on account of the Gentiles being received into the faith, and because that those who had before been a poor and despised Gentile race, were now in the bosom of Abraham, the father of nations. And justly, indeed, were they thus received. For it was while Abraham was yet a Gentile, that he believed God, and turned from the worship of idols to the knowledge of God. Therefore, it was proper that they who were partakers of his conversion and faith, should rest in his bosom, sharing the same final lot, the same habitation and the same blessedness. And the Jewish

people longed for one drop of the former legal sprinklings and purifications to refresh their tongue, that they might confidently say to us that the Law was still efficacious and availing. But it was not. For the Law was only until John. And the Psalmist says, sacrifice and oblations thou wouldst not, &c."

Theophylact then briefly observes, that we ought to make a moral use of this Parable, and not despise our servants who stand at our gates.

*Theophylacti in Quatuor Evangelia Enarrationes*, p. 119. Edit. Basil, 1525.



NOTE B.

We may add the testimony of another writer, who, we suppose, was not an Universalist, to the correctness of the views we have advanced. We extract the following from a work entitled a "Rationale of the Litteral doctrine of Original Sin, &c. By James Bate, M. A. Rector of Deptford."

"We will suppose, then, *the rich man who farced so sumptuously, to be the Jew; so amply enriched with the heavenly treasure of divine revelation. The poor beggar, who lay at his gate, in so miserable a plight, was the poor Gentile; now reduced to the last degree of want in regard to religious knowledge. The crumbs which fell from the rich man's table, and which the beggar was so desirous of picking up, were such fragments of patriarchal and Jewish traditions, as their travelling philosophers were able to pick up, with their utmost care and dilligence. And those philosophers were also the dogs that licked the sores of heathenism, and endeavoured to supply the wants of divine revelation, by such schemes and hypotheses concerning the nature of the gods, and the obligation of moral duties, as (due allowance made for their ignorance and frailties) did no small honor to human nature, and yet thereby plainly shewed, how little a way unassisted reason could go, without some supernatural help: as one of the wisest of them frankly confessed. About one and the same time, the beggar dies, and is carried by the angels (i. e. God's spiritual messengers to mankind) into Abraham's bosom; that is, he is engrafted in to the church of God. And the rich man also dies and is buried. He dies what we call a political death. His dispensation ceases. He is rejected from being any longer the peculiar son of God.—The people whom he parabolically represents, are miserably destroyed by the Romans, and the wretched remains of them driven in to exile over the face of the earth: mere vagabonds, with a kind of mark set upon them, like Cain their prototyps, for a like crime; and which mark may perhaps be—their adherence to the law. Whereby it came amazingly to pass, that these people, though dispersed, yet still dwell alone and separate; not being reckoned among the nations, as Balaam foretold. The rich man being reduced to this state of misery, complains bitterly of his hard fate; but is told by Abraham, that he slipped his opportunity. While Lazarus laid hold on his, and now receives the comfort of it. The Jew complains of the want of more evidence, to convince his countrymen, the five brethren: and would fain have Lazarus sent from the dead to convert them. But Abraham tells him, that if their own scriptures cannot convince them of their error, neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead. And exactly so it proved in the event. For, this parable was delivered towards the end of the third year of our Lord's ministry; and in the fourth, or following year of it, the words put in to the mouth of Abraham, as the conclusion of the parable, are most literally verified, by our Lord's raising another Lazarus from the dead. And we may presume that the beggar had the fictitious name of Lazarus given him in the parable, not without some reason. Since the supposed request of the rich man, was fully answered, by our Lord's raising another, and a real Lazarus, from the dead. But what was the consequence? Did this notorious miracle convince the rich man's brethren? No, truly.—His visit to them from the dead, was so far from convincing them, that they actually consulted together, that they might put Lazarus also to death; because that by reason of him, many of the Jews went away and believed on Jesus. So much for the true sense of this parable."*